

## Close Reading Check List

\_\_\_ First, number the paragraphs.

\_\_\_ Circle a minimum of THREE unfamiliar words and write your definitions in the margin!

\_\_\_ Underline the main idea of each paragraph.

\_\_\_ Highlight the subheading of each section. Out to the side of each section (under each subheading), write 3-5 words to summarize that section.

\_\_\_ Finally, go through the article one more time and out to the side of the text, annotate (make a note) out to the side any information that you think is important, interesting or surprising.

## Student Blogs

Single Gender Schools vs.  
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**Consider a  
School Switch**

by Cassie O'Hara

1 At the end of last year, my parents said that they planned to send me to an all-girls school. *Have they lost their minds?* I thought.

There was no way I was going to an all-girls school. My friends were getting ready to go to our community's co-ed middle school! My parents patiently explained that I would get a better education and be better prepared for college if I went to an all-girls school. I had my doubts.

2 Against my will, I started at an all-girls public charter school this year. Even though I hate to admit that my parents were right, I'm so happy I made the switch. When I was in my co-ed public school, it didn't take me long to get the picture. Boys were supposed to be good at math and science. Girls were supposed to be good at reading and writing. Even though I

**Opinion**Cassie  
O'Hara

had always been more interested in solving equations than in journal-writing, I hid my interest in these "non-girl" subjects so I could fit in. At my all-girls school, these kinds of stereotypes just don't exist. Girls are encouraged to actively pursue any subject that interests them. In other words, it's just as cool to like math as it is to like reading.

3 My confidence and self-esteem have also grown over the past year. In my co-ed school, I rarely raised my hand. At my all-girls school, everyone is encouraged to participate and share their opinions. I feel more comfortable saying what I really think; I'm no longer worried about being too outspoken. At my all-girls school, I finally feel like I'm playing in the "game of life" rather than just sitting on the sidelines.

4 My grades have improved since I switched schools. The teachers at my new school tailor their lessons to help me learn. I also feel my new school is going to make me more successful in college and in life. Imagine my surprise when I did a little online research and found out that many female leaders went to

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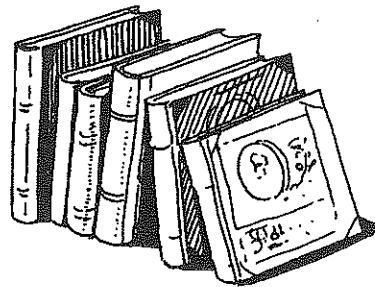
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all-girls schools. One-quarter of the female members of Congress and one-third of the women on Fortune 100 company boards have degrees from all-women's colleges! I know going to an all-girls public school doesn't guarantee future success, but it seems like a step in the right direction.

5 A year ago, I never would have thought that an all-girls school was the right choice for me. Today, I'd encourage all girls to consider an all-girls school. I know I'm a different girl than I was a year ago—and I have big plans for the woman I'm going to be.



## Give Co-Ed a Chance

by Greg Rivas

1 Here's how my morning usually starts: *beep, beep, beep*—my alarm goes off. I fumble to turn it off and grab a few extra Z's. Some guys would want the extra time to get ready. Not me. I go to an all-boys school, so I throw on a rumpled uniform and don't really care about how I look. I mean, I brush my hair and my teeth and all, but it's not like I'm looking to impress anyone. The thing is, I've been going to an all-boys school since first grade. I'd kind of like the chance to impress a girl.


2 My parents sent me to an all-boys school to focus on my schoolwork and to have more opportunities. I can't argue with the academic aspect of their decision—I've certainly learned a lot from books as well as my dedicated teachers. But I haven't learned as much about the casual, everyday

### Opinion



Greg  
Rivas

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way that boys and girls can just talk to each other. I get nervous when I meet girls because I don't really know what to say to them. I know it comes naturally for some guys, but I'm the kind of kid who needs an opening—like, "Do you want to study for the science test together?" or "Can you believe how much homework Mrs. Pierce gives?" Without some common ground to start from, I usually find myself tongue-tied and staring at my shoes when I meet a girl I like.

3 Another problem with an all-boys school is that it's often seen as uncool to do stuff like choir and theater or to show a sensitive side in a discussion. One time my friend was talking about how hard it was for him when his grandma died. He kind of started to tear up a little and the other guys stared at him like whatever he had might be contagious. I think there is a little less pressure to be "manly" in a co-ed school. Just by adding girls into the mix, you add more diversity, more points of view, and (maybe) a little more acceptance.

4 The thing that surprises me most about my parents' decision to send me to an all-boys school is that my mom is a lawyer. She works mostly with men, and she often says that she has a hard time getting them to listen to her. I think men and women need to learn to work with each other. It doesn't happen automatically. There are only about a million of those "men-are-from-Mars-and-women-are-from-Venus" books that prove that men and women often don't think exactly the same way. However, that doesn't mean that both don't have some really great ideas and valid opinions.

5 When you're already in the workplace, it's too late to learn how to work with people of the opposite sex. Men and women should learn to listen to one another right from the start. We are equals after all, but if you separate us when we're young, that's not the message we're getting. The real world is a place where men and women live and work side-by-side. I'd like the chance to go to school in that world, too.

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Use “Consider a School Switch” to answer questions 1–3.

Standard 2 (Context Clues) M

1. Read the sentence from paragraph 4 of the passage.

*The teachers at my new school taylor their lessons to help me learn.*

Which word below could be used in place of taylor?

- A Adapt
- B Create
- C Plan
- D Teach

Standard 11 (Faulty Reasoning) M

2. Why does Cassie initially hide her interest in math?
  - A She does not know if successful women focus on that subject.
  - B She gets noticed for being better at writing than any other subject.
  - C She feels pressure to excel at reading rather than math and science.
  - D She is unsure whether she wants to study math further once she graduates.

6.RC.D (Inferences) H

3. Cassie says that she finally feels like she is playing in the “game of life” because she—
  - A feels confident at her all-girls school
  - B has improved in sports at her all-girls school
  - C protested her parents sending her to an all-girls school
  - D performed research on leaders who attended all-girls schools

Use “Give Co-Ed a Chance” to answer questions 4–6.

Standard 2 (Dictionary/Glossary) M

4. Read the sentence from paragraph 1 of the passage and the thesaurus entries that follow.

*I mean, I brush my hair and my teeth and all, but it's not like I'm looking to impress anyone.*

Main Entry: **impress**

Part of speech: *verb*

Definition: influence

Synonyms: interest, disturb

Main Entry: **impress**

Part of speech: *verb*

Definition: emphasize

Synonyms: stress, set

Which synonym for impress works best in this sentence?

- A Disturb
- B Interest
- C Set
- D Stress

Standard 11 (Faulty Reasoning) H

5. Greg feels that his mom should understand his school's—
- A quality of books
  - B ability of teachers
  - C lack of social opportunities
  - D snobbish attitude among students

Standard 10 (Facts For/Against an Issue) M

6. Even though Greg accepts that men and women think differently, he points out that they both—
- A are equally accepting
  - B have worthwhile ideas
  - C get paid the same salaries
  - D try to win favor in the workplace

Use both “Consider a School Switch” and “Give Co-Ed a Chance” to answer questions 7–10.

*Standard 11 (Compare/Contrast Viewpoints) H*

7. With which of Cassie’s points would Greg most likely agree?
- A Everyone is encouraged to express opinions at school.
  - B Teachers’ actions influence their students’ performance.
  - C All-girls schools encourage the arts and sciences equally.
  - D Co-ed schools fail at preparing students for the workplace.

*Standard 11 (Compare/Contrast Viewpoints) H*

8. Both writers would most likely agree that students should—
- A go to smaller, more private schools
  - B try to get the most benefit from their school experience
  - C attend the school they like best regardless of their parents’ wishes
  - D research the accomplishments of famous people whom they admire

*Standard 9 (Stated/Implied Purpose) H*

9. The purpose of each passage is to—
- A share opinions about certain types of schools
  - B persuade readers to attend typical public schools
  - C tell readers which school activities to participate in
  - D inform readers about the benefits of all-girls schools

*Standard 13 (Media Messages) H*

10. Which statement about both “Consider a School Switch” and “Give Co-Ed a Chance” is correct?
- A The articles appear in the same school newspaper.
  - B The articles are essays written for a school assignment.
  - C The articles are blog entries found on a common Web site.
  - D The articles were written by students that know each other.